

UTAH AMONG FIRST 10 STATES WITH CERTIFIED ORGANIC PROGRAM

Salt Lake City, April 30, 2002 – Utah is among the nation's first ten states to employ certified organic inspectors. The step means that Utah now has accredited inspectors who will certify organic production and handling operations to comply with National Organic Program (NOP) standards.

"We are pleased to be among the first states to offer this service to our organic farmers and ranchers," said Cary G. Peterson, Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food. "I believe we created an easy-to-use system that will help growers develop new and profitable markets." He added.

Oct. 21, 2002, is the deadline to ensure that all qualified organic production and handling operations are certified to use the USDA organic seal.

The new organic standards offer a national definition for the term "organic." It details the methods, practices and substances that can be used in producing and handling organic crops, livestock and processed products.

All agricultural products labeled organic must originate from farms or handling operations certified by a state or private agency accredited by USDA. Farms and handling operations that sell less than \$5,000 worth per year of organic agricultural products are exempt from certification.

The 10 State Accredited Certifying Agents are:

Idaho Department of Agriculture, Iowa Department of Agriculture, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Montana Department of Agriculture, New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission, Texas Department of Agriculture, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Virginia Department of Agriculture, and Washington State Department of Agriculture.

For more information about Utah's organic program visit: <http://www.ag.state.ut.us/plantind/organic.html>

President Bush Signs Farm Bill

President Bush signed the farm bill on Monday, May 13, 2002. It is called the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, and has been officially designated as Public Law 107-171.

The President says America's farmers need a farm bill that provides support and help when times are tough. "This bill is generous, and will provide a safety net for farmers," said the President. "And it will do so without encouraging overproduction and depressing prices. It will allow farmers and ranchers to plan and operate based on market realities, not government dictates," he added.

Farm Facts

- ◆ Our Nation's agriculture industry represents 13 percent of our economy.
- ◆ Agriculture employs 17 percent of the American workforce.
- ◆ 96 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States.
- ◆ In 2002, USDA projects exports to \$57 billion -- up \$3.5 billion from the current year.
- ◆ Agriculture remains the bright spot in our balance of trade -- the trade surplus in agriculture goods is expected to be even higher in 2002 -- at \$18 billion.
- ◆ USDA Secretary Veneman: US agriculture is twice as dependent on exports than the general U.S. economy.

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UDAF Stimulates Agriculture With \$628,000 In Grants

Salt Lake City – The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) awarded grants totaling \$628,000 to 32 applicants as part of a program aimed at stimulating and promoting agricultural production in the state.

The Department received the funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through a national program intended to stimulate production of crops that ordinarily do not receive financial support.

“This is a program aimed at enhancing Utah agriculture in ways that generate added revenue directly to farmers and ranchers,” said Cary G. Peterson, Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food.

The department received 82 grant applications totaling funding requests of more than \$3.5 million dollars.

“We received numerous applications for high quality projects, and commend those who applied,” said Peterson. “We anticipate further grants from the USDA, and look forward to offering these grants again in the future,” he added.

The \$628,000 in grants is expected to have a positive economic rippling effect on Utah’s agricultural economy.

“Based on the caliber of projects and new production opportunities, we anticipate a very positive affect on jobs and our economy,” said Randy Parker, UDAF Marketing and Conservation Director. “One project that was funded will help a businessperson raise more trout eggs, that in turn will help generate more jobs and sales in his

New UDAF Service Helps Utah Fruit & Vegetable Growers/Packers

Third Party Audits assure good handling practices Salt Lake City – Large grocery stores and fast food chains such as Albertson’s and McDonalds are asking for it, and Utah food producers are providing it. The commodity that’s being asked for is security. The security that the food coming from the farm and going into commerce is safe and clean.

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) is providing third-party audits to assure that raw agricultural products are grown and handled according to good food handling practices.

Independent third party auditing and certification of what is known as Good Handling Practices (GHP) or Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) is now being offered by the UDAF as part of a federal/state cooperative program that includes counterparts in many other states.

The UDAF is one of the first to receive training to do GAP and GHP audit. Audits are being asked for from such place as Utah Onion, Muir Roberts Co. Inc., Robert T. Call & Sons, Hines and Company, Black Island Farms and other packers. The GAP & GHP will need to be completed before the shipping point shed can market their produce. Gary Black, President of Condies Foods says, “Most of out of state growers are already certified and meet this requires. We have one year in which Utah Growers have to become certified.”

“We are getting increased requests from buyers and buying groups to provide Third Party Inspections for our produce grown and shipped from Utah,” says Steven W. Mittendorf, General Manager of Hines and Company, Inc. “As a group, we feel that it would be very beneficial to implement a program whereby a third party would help us by monitoring our growing and production process,” said David E. Muir, Vice President of Sales, Muir Roberts Co., Inc.

The audit verification program shows that the producer or packer has processes in places that reduce the potential for microbial contamination of fresh fruit and

Audit Alliance training and is certified to conduct these audits and will be training fresh fruit and vegetable inspector.

UDAF Closes Salt Lake Serology Lab Transfers Workload To Logan, Provo

Veterinarians who send blood samples to the UDAF office in Salt Lake City for livestock disease testing are advised that the serology work will now be done in the Logan and Provo labs beginning June 14, 2002. The department is closing its Salt Lake City Serology Lab. The last day the lab will receive samples is June 12. Beginning June 12, serology samples should be mailed to: The State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, 950 East 1400 North, Logan, UT 84322-5700 (435) 797-1895.

The UDAF is closing the lab because of a decline in brucellosis among livestock in the United States, and therefore a corresponding decreased workload in the Salt Lake City lab. The Logan and Provo veterinary labs will continue to perform blood tests for brucellosis, blue-tongue, anaplasmosis, leptospirosis, vibriosis, and perform many other diagnostic tests.

The Salt Lake laboratory will continue to mail brucellosis vaccines to veterinarians, as well as tuberculin which is used to test for tuberculosis. The lab will also mail literature and other mass mailing information.

The Serology lab closing comes in conjunction with the retirement of Jack Small, the department’s microbiologist. Jack has been with the department for 34 years.